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Keep The Pressure On

Wendy Wilson
SNR

Nelson and Winnie came to New York.
They came to give their talk.
Keep the pressure on!
Keep the pressure on Apartheid.
Keep the sanctions up.
Don't give up.

Twenty seven years in jail, but his
message remains the same.
One vote, one man,
black or white
equal rights

Keep the pressure on!
Keep the pressure on Apartheid.
Keep the sanctions up.
Don't give up.

This day was incident free.
Nelson and Winnie we gathered to see.
Keep the pressure on!
Keep the pressure on Apartheid.
Keep the sanctions up.
Don't give up.



Photo by Chris Kozlowski, SAS

The Who

Melissa Varnavas
SAS

Time like a mirad wing

enfolds me.

Guilt like a cage

entraps me.

Love like the fates

control me.

And I am not I.

Untitled

Chris Kozlowski
SAS

Another wallet stolen.
They say that she
Left the doors wide open.
He took her wallet,
After politely asking
Where an office was.
So lock the doors, lock the
Doors, and feel safe again.
Let us talk as though
The thief is so much different
From ourselves.
Let us pretend we are
Unlike him, and by so doing,
Separate ourselves from
The act of theft.
As the snow on the
Sidewalk melts,
We keep ourselves warm.

Coming Out

Kathleen Jones
SAS/GS

From under a rock
I climb into the light.
From under foot
I stand beside my oppressor.
From within my skin
I sing a song of freedom
From within my mind
I dream and create a new world.

Dance: Of A Bad Wolf

(For Miles D. Davis)

Robert Maldonado
SNR

A lady sits in a #4 train
to Woodlawn Road
reading '...Riding Hood'
to her stroller-bound toddler.
I break
from my 'Jazz Poetry Anthology,'
where rhymes of Hugh's
'Dream Boogie'
happily beat in the head
by the feet of those who need
to 'Listen closely:.'
Yes!
I can hear the muted horn of Miles
play to the beat of the feet
dancing' in my head--
'Bye Bye Blackbird.'
I think about Mongo's Ray Vega
mute along on his horn--
'The Weary Blues':
no ivory keys,

just a silver Getz'
(blues for Miles),
and a wolf...hip-hoppin'!
re-boppin'!
connivin'!
Sure Long, it's a happy beat,
nice tempo to my feet...
yet, so heavy,
not so neat!
There's a wolf dancing' on a bed,
be-boppin'!
re-boppin'!
Horn in hand--
A sound so round,
profound and pure.
Hey, there's Louis
standing by the door!
It's their night off,
and now both are dancing'
on Birdland's bed!

To a Granddaughter

Andrea Mihalovic
SAS

One day
when I was with my grandfather
he told me a little story
I never understood.

Right now, she is a little girl
surrounded with love
long dark hair and big brown eyes
I hope her beauty doesn't change.
She doesn't know much
about the cruelty of people
who will one day
break her heart.
She sleeps so peacefully
each night,
when I come and see her
to say goodnight.
Some day she'll wake up
full of questions
and I, watching her grow
will get scared.
She might want to know,
why everyone is different

and they look at her
with hateful eyes.
Looking for love
she might find
hurt and betrayal,
and I could never watch her cry.
maybe while she's growing up
she won't find friendship
but jealousy and greed
how could I tell her why.
What if she becomes one of them
and hungry for power
she forgets the meaning of love
and me.
How beautiful she is a princess
who does not yet know the world
and what awaits her.
Afraid of letting go
I want her to stay as she is
a little girl
surrounded with love.
I understand now.

Untitled

Heather Parker
SAS

It is so dark & still here
 and I'm leaving again.
 Everything has hardly begun,
 the summer's song
 still
 lingers.
 There are people yet to meet
 and go and play
 and good times
 yet
 to be had,
 sitting in the back - seat
 singing
 speeding
 (ah, careless youth)
 on back roads.
 Why must
 we all be called
 away
 torn apart
 strand from
 trembling
 strand?

And why
 is it that
 we all must love one another so,

as we
act resilient,
adult--

why ally ourselves
with that burgeoning
that is making us

say

farewell, ... farewell.

Farewell,

to hot days

to frolic

to play

to laughing,

to that

famed

simplicity

that never really existed anyway.

Goodbye

to all that is

sweet&

good&

overwhelming&

overrated.

Adults don't smile

as

they

once

did.

(You might have noticed.)

Dishes

Laura Hudson
SAS

The sink was ready. The dishes were immersed in water and stacked just the way she liked them: cereal bowls on top, then saucers, dinner plates on the bottom; the silverware in a neat pile to the right of the stack of dishes, all fork, spoon, and knife handles pointing towards her; the cups and glasses. On the counter to the left of the sink; the pots and pans stacked on the stove. The water was at the perfect temperature: hot enough to make her hands tingle, but not so hot as to cause pain. She had used the spray nozzle to fluff the suds up so high that they mounded up over the top of the sink and completely hid the surface of the water.

She plunged her hands into the water, nearly all the way up to her elbows, and swished her fingers around, both feeling for the dishrag and making sure that the piles and stacks were where they were supposed to be. She loved the way her hands felt under the water; there was a bouyancy and calmness there that did not exist in any other part of her life. She thought of that underwater realm of placid warmth as something akin to another world. Sometimes all she wanted to do was shrink down small enough to be able to enter and live in that world. She wanted to feel the warmth of the water over her entire body rather than just her hands. She would feel safe in the dishwater, there among the orderly stacks and piles of dishes. The suds would provide a protective canopy over her and no one would be able to find her or bother her.

She could just imagine George's surprise when he came home from work and couldn't find her. He wouldn't know how to work the coffee maker or where to find the remote control to the TV or how to even begin making dinner for the kids. Just imagine. She chuckled, found the dishrag, and pulled it up out of the water triumphantly. She held it up above the water and watched the water suds run off.

She could also imagine his anger. It would rise slowly, but soon he would begin to get impatient with the kids and the coffee maker. He wouldn't take it out on anyone--he hadn't yet--but she knew the potential was there, and she lived in fear of it. She was playing a game with unknown consequences but only George knew the rules. She knew that someday she would do something to violate those hidden rules, and she knew that George's pent-up anger would then be released on her and maybe even on the kids. Her hand felt cold in the air so she returned it quickly to the water.

She began to wash the dishes, methodically wiping them and then

rinsing them over the other sink in water so hot that she had to position her fingers so that the water wouldn't run directly over them. The hot water would dry quickly and that way she wouldn't have to towel dry the dishes.

She shouldn't have thought of George. He and his anger intruded into and controlled every other part of her life; she shouldn't have let him intrude into this, the one daily ritual that was hers alone.

Now it was ruined. Already she could hear her best friend Donna's voice in her head, "Julie, honey, you gotta get away from that man. You can't spend your entire life tiptoeing around hopin' he won't explode on you. 'Cause it's going to happen. It's like he's sick, Julie, and you don't have the medicine to cure him." Did Donna think she didn't know that? She knew it. She'd known it since their wedding night three years ago. She had looked into his eyes, still giddy from the excitement and perfection of the wedding, and she had known. She had seen their entire relationship in his satisfied eyes; she had seen her constant efforts to please him always fall short, had seen his frustration with his job and his life slowly build and somehow get transferred to her, had seen her life become one desperate exercise in placation. But she did the best she could, no matter what Donna thought. She wasn't after all, one of those liberated, educated city girls who had the world at her feet. She was a 24-year-old mother of two whose husband didn't like her very much. And she liked to get away from it all by doing the dishes. She did the best she could.

The pile of clean dishes was now spread across the counter drying. There was only one dirty pot left. She got it off the stove and peeked into it. Carrots. At least it wasn't dried-on mashed potato. She hated scrubbing that off. She finished washing and rinsing the pot, then balanced it carefully on top of the heap and stepped back to admire her work. She had taken a dirty pile of dishes and made them clean. She liked this half-finished stage of washing dishes much better than the completed stage where the dishes were put out of sight into cabinets and cupboards. Right now she could see how many dishes she had washed, she could point the pile out to someone and they would be impressed.

She swished the dishrag around in the water once more and then pulled the plug in the drain to let the water out. The level of the suds lowered slowly as the water drained out. She suddenly wondered what George would do if he came home to find her miniaturized and swimming in the dishwater. Would he be able to cope? Would he understand why she was there or would he pull the plug and watch her get sucked down the drain? The water gurgled as the last clump of suds ran down the drain. She found she couldn't say one way or the other.

The Drowning

Margaret Vlazny
GS

Every now and then you hear of one.
You shudder, shake your head, and
knock wood but you keep moving, streaming
down-river with all the rest of them,
buoyed by careful ignorance and
a fine summer day. Kicking, laughing,
gasping, singing, you hoist yourself on
the dead man's float for a gulp of air.

The mute scream sails skyward like a
black balloon. A man has gone under
heels over head like a tumbling fetus.
You try to grab him but he's beyond your
reach, all flailing limbs and bobbing head
and naked, naked, naked white
sinking feet first into it
the spiral crystal chasm, the one you
never see in the middle of the river
because you had this fixed idea about
the natural flow of things.

I love you you scream at the head
just before it goes down (as if he could
take your love with him).

What hurts the most later is the stillness
of the unmarked water: just watch how it
drips through your fingers.

He emerges across the misty void
squirting water from his mouth like a
playful dolphin, warming his face in the
sun. He smiles faintly back at you but
moves on, regret tossed behind, as distant
as the grief that always lies ahead.

Fear

Andrea Mihalovic
SAS

I am afraid
of the man who watches me
standing outside, everywhere I go
is where he is

I am afraid of the look
in his eyes, his desire
leaves me cold

and desperate

I am afraid to sleep

and to dream of

his obsession, or is it mine?

his footsteps behind me

are on my mind

I am afraid to be followed

every day, every time

his breath is all around me

his thoughts are deep and loud

I am afraid to be caught

to be held in his

embrace

to know he is satisfied

I am afraid

to die.

Cinco minutos en extasis

Suzannette Lebrón
SAS

Hoy, al volver a mi reposo,
recordé tus ojos:
cerré los míos;
entonces, al instante recordé tu rostro.
Al entrar a mi aposento,
cubriéndome del frío con mis abrigos,
una anaconda tibia me arropó:
recordé tus brazos.

Entonces, al abrir mis ojos, aparecieron los tuyos.
Tu rostro confrontábase con el mío...
Al tocarte con mis manos,
la serpiente zigzagaba alrededor de mis brazos,
pues sentí tus brazos...
alrededor de mi cuerpo,
pues sentí tu cuerpo

Ay! Serpiente que nos enreda,
que nos ata
a un efímero espejismo...
Quisiera comer, contigo, de nuestro fruto prohibido;
es espantoso el dolor de no ser libre otra vez!
Otra vez, como en aquel tiempo,
mis brazos se convirtieron en alas de condor,
que revolotea en el cielo,
por ser libre para amar y ser amado,
intensamente...

Mas, cinco minutos pasaron...,
entonces, tus brazos huyeron de mi aposento;
tus ojos se convirtieron en estrellas fugaces del firmamento;
y tu rostro escapose, agonizante, de mi universo...

Hace ya tres años, que no te veo.

Five Minutes of Ecstasy

Translation

Today, while I returned to my repose,
 I recalled your eyes:
 I closed mine;
 then, I instantly recalled your face.
 After I entered into my room,
 and while I warmed up with my blanket,
 an anaconda involved me into its warmth:
 I recalled your arms.

Then, when I opened my eyes, your eyes appeared.
 Your face confronted itself with my face...
 When I touched you with my hands,
 that snake zigzagged all around my arms,
 since I felt your arms...
 around my body,
 since I felt your body...

Alas! There is snake that entangles us both,
 that embraces us both
 into a non-everlasting mirage...
 I would love to consume our forbidden fruit with you:
 the grief of not being free again is frightening!
 Again, just like in that past time,
 my arms became the wings of a condor,
 which flutters around the blue sky
 being free to love and to be loved
 with such intensity...
 But, five minutes have passed away...,
 and then, your arms escaped from my room;
 your eyes became shooting stars in the heavens;
 and your face escaped in anguish, from my universe...

I have not ever seen you since, after--already--three years.

I'll Never Be Free

Julissa J. Trinidad
SAS

I'll never be part of this land of dreams and this land of the brave. Because I am not brave, because I have lost my dreams. I can never be part of this land, I need a dream, I have to be brave. I cannot have dreams, because my dreams need someone that is brave, to feel what I feel. I feel that a dream has to survive in this land of the brave and free. My dream is in chains, and it will never be free.



Artwork by Maryse Kowack, SAS

A Friend

Melissa Varnanvas
SAS

I never could have dreamed
what fortunes small regime
To place me with one so bold
who silently protects against the cold.

Unknown to me I thought I saw all there was to see.
Yet, you in your quiet way
Had saved me from the chilling seas.

The Taoist bounced upon the stage
and striped jokes dispersed the rage
Of four small walls
Which never closed our halls.

A friend like you
I never knew
Before the music Billy played
And now I see
that you and me
will be friends for always.

The Great Blue Heron

Heather L. Archibald
SAS

Dawn is rising across the misty lake casting a gilded shadow over the glass-like surface. Morning is so peaceful; it is the only time I can think about what is facing me and whether or not I made the right decisions throughout my life.

As I sit in the hull of my canoe, I reflect on the coming events and let the gentle morning breeze have it's way with me. Through the corner of my eye I see near the shore a figure wading in the water and basking in the early sun. I pick up my paddle and begin to move in small quiet strokes toward the figure for a better view and see that it is a Great Blue Heron. I wish that I could have someone to share this experience with, but no one in my family understands my love for nature, not even my fiancé.

He graduated from college with a degree in business and is working on Wall Street. We were high school sweethearts and started dating when he was fifteen and I was thirteen, even though we had known each other all of our lives. By the time I was eighteen he had already proposed and I had willingly accepted. Now I am twenty two and scared to death of what the rest of my life holds for me. I really do love him, but I am scared of marriage and knowing that I no longer have daddy's shoulder to cry on when things don't go my way.

I paddle into shore and see my mother standing on the wharf with a cup of coffee in her hand.

"Mornin'" she says as she grabs the rope to attach the canoe to the dock. "Boy, you're up early this morning. "Excited about today?"

"I guess so."

"I hear a hesitation in that."

"Mom, were you scared when you married Daddy?"

"Sure I think everyone is afraid on their wedding day."

Why? Is that what's wrong? If you have any hesitations about marrying Bryan you should talk to him."

"It's not hesitations about Bryan, I really do love him. It's everything else that starts now that scares me."

"These are things the two of you have to work out, but that is what marriage is, working out your differences and problems. Not only is your husband supposed to be your lover; he's also supposed to be your best friend."

"Bryan is my best friend and I guess that is what I'm also worried about. I don't want anything causing us to resent each other like so many couples do. I know you say we need to communicate, but some things I just can't tell him because I know he won't understand. Do you honestly think he would understand if I told him that I saw a Great Blue Heron this morning? He would just smile at me and say, 'that's nice dear! like you're thinking right now.'"

I look up at the deck and see my father standing there watching us with that smile he gets whenever he's proud. I remember how he used to be my hero, but that's all changed now. I guess that is because from now on he will be my father and not my daddy.

"Girls, you better get going or we'll be late for the church and you, Maid of Honor, will have your head on a platter." He hollers down at us with that odd sense of humor that is his trademark. I am really going to miss his corny jokes. He never really spent any time with me, but I knew that he was always there if I needed him.

"Coming," Mom and I holler up, hoping to satisfy him.

"Are you okay?" Mom asks me just quiet enough so Daddy wouldn't hear.

"Yeah, just scared."

"You're entitled to be."

We both walk up to the back door of the cottage in silence and I can't help thinking that not only am I scared I am also confused about myself. How can I ever tell Bryan that I am scared to marry him after we had been engaged for four years?

As we pull into the church parking lot an hour later, Bryan's mother runs out to meet the car. "It's about time you

get here. Get inside you'll be late for your own wedding. All of the girls are inside waiting for you. You know I've been waiting for this day to come since Bryan took you to the prom."

From the way she is going on and on the entire way inside you would think that she was the mother of the bride instead of the groom. All this is making me even more scared, especially the thought that this woman is going to be my mother-in-law, it is enough to scare anyone. I wonder if the fear I have is a result of the pressure from everyone that we are expected to be married.

As the music begins to play, the bridal party with their ushers proceed down the aisle. My dad squeezes my arm and whispers with a smile and a tear in his eye.

"I'm so proud of you. You remind me so much of your mother on our wedding day. You even have that same scared look in your eyes."

"I saw a Great Blue Heron this morning."

"Did you? That's great! They are such great birds. Did you see it fly?"

"I'll miss you Daddy."

"No you won't, you'll have Bryan."

He ushers me down the aisle and hands me over to Bryan like nothing. How could he do this? Was this really that easy for him? The priest is talking, but I'm not paying attention. I am too busy being scared of what is to come and upset that my daddy could just hand me over to another man.

"Do you Naomi Sarah Avery take Bryan Denis Benedict to be your husband...?"

I look into his eyes and see that same fear as my eyes feel and a smile comes between us.

"I do."

Wet Walk

Shannon Lalli
SAS

I walk without fear or consciousness
Atop black rocks glistening as jewels in wetness.
My feet weigh each black carat,
Soles turn yellow, as hair falls, long, wet.
Water rises from indentations of the brown,
impenetrable earth.
Nothing is permitted inside.

Yellow foot falls far into puddle,
Purple with worms dancing.

The dead cry to awaken the living,
Their tears rip my gown of ivory and hit my pink flesh.
Dog chews on dirty man's leg,
Tasting life's sourness.
Smells of deception an lies surface from the puddle,
As man smokes cigar between yellow holes of decay,
Hidden in the blue shadow of the moon.

Yellow foot falls far into puddle,
Purple with worms dancing.

Nakedness knows no, knows not shame,
When the earth is hard and the sky black.
The puddle sees my eyes of black jewels.
I lose my ring, let it fall,
Fall among the worms.
They remain eating my jewel,
Blinding my eyes from truth.

My uneven lips swell, speak, scream words
without pronunciation.

Man discards burnt cigar into puddle and turns,
his back against my words.

Blue shadow falls on him in disgust.

Man chews on fingernails and examines dog bites

On his exposed leg.

Yellow foot falls far into puddle,

Purple with worms dancing.

Nothing is permitted inside except me.

Illusion Delusion

Allison Cunningham
SAS

I.

After having delivered the kiss
that was supposed to alter my world
(but in my opinion wasn't that great
I mean, babe, the earth didn't really move for me)
you just stand there
so certain that you are so charming
with that fairytale smile of yours
and expect me to be grateful?
Meanwhile, I just want to hit the snooze button
pull the satin pillow over my golden crown
and go back to sleep.
I was having such a lovely dream
please
just a few minutes more.

II.

So the shoe fits;
he has a shoe to fit every pretty serving girl
in this kingdom and the next.
He is always trying to change me;
so I unbait the traps he lays for mice
so I grow pumpkins in the royal garden
so I go to bed at midnight
so I every once in a while get this urge to clean.
He doesn't understand me;
this is who I am!
I don't think I was meant to be a princess
it was a one night thing
in a borrowed dress.
I hate it when he tells me that he could have had any woman
there
it makes it seem all the more unfair
that it was my fairy godmother
who had the magic wand
and the bibbety-bobbety-boo.

III.

Sometimes, when I wake up next to him
 remembering the drunken rages
 the screaming fights
 the days he roams around the castle
 unshaven and growling complaints
 I wonder where the magic carpet went wrong.
 When did he turn back into a beast?
 Sometimes, when I find myself mercifully alone
 staring out the library window at our domain
 I try to remember what I saw
 behind that ferocious facade
 that made me love him enough to break the enchantment.
 I wonder if I could somehow recast the spell,
 turn him back into the beast I loved.

IV.

All of the sudden its black and white
 and Auntie Em
 Oh sure, I told them there's no place like home
 but come on...Kansas?
 So Toto and I packed our things
 and headed out to see the world.
 Well, here I am in this dive bar in Chicago
 and I see this blonde bitch
 totally wasted
 talking to a cat named Dinah
 a real cat!
 So I feel sorry for her,
 buy her a drink
 She gets hysterical,
 asks me if I've seen a white rabbit
 with a watch and a waistcoat
 and I realize
 I'm searching for Munchkinland.

V.

I feel old and heavy
 pulled down by the gravity of your world
 look at my face
 you can't even tell that I was once beautiful,
 Listen to this old woman's cackling voice.
 Once I could sing to seduce a prince.
 A prince?
 An old man dozing on his throne!
 The sea calls to me
 I long for the sights and sounds and smells
 I so foolishly left behind.
 I was so young!
 I am so old!
 Would you even stir in your dreaming, my prince,
 if I left your side for that old lover's embrace?

VI.

I woke up one morning
 to reality
 finding that
 sometime during the night
 during my innocent dreaming
 the poetry had gone.

Lamb To The Slaughter

Laurie Trombley
SAS

A mindless body
is all I am
nothing respected-
like an innocent lamb.
No mind of my own,
no choices to make
always asleep,
never awake.
This is the way you want me to be
eyes always closed,
so I really cannot see.
Your voice echoes in my head,
as your words scream in my ear,
controlled to each extent--
controlled by love and fear.
I thought you'd ease my pain
and mend my broken heart,
But you just have to own me
and never let me start.
Everything I say, affects you not at all,
except if I cry
and do not look like a doll.
"Beautiful, princess, pumpkin pie-
please don't do that,
please don't cry."
Those words strike me
and I lash out
but you don't hear me when I shout.
Nothing but perfection,
nothing with mind
just always a doll,
except if I cry.

A Single Leaf

Lyvett Velazquez
SAS

It's the middle of October. Autumn is here. The wind is blowing, "God, when will I go?"

I was born on a sunny afternoon. As I entered this world my brothers and sisters were clapping generously. I guess they were glad to see me. As the days passed, I blossomed into a beautiful bright green leaf. I had a big tall tree for my home. I enjoyed looking down at the world, the sun shining on me all day and the moon illuminating me at night. I could see people passing me, talking, laughing. I could see the animals climbing, playing, all of God's creatures living their lives.

It was getting windier, and colder. My days were shorter, my nights forever. My brothers and sisters were departing. They would tumble down our home one by one. Some of my brothers were orange and my sisters were yellow, some even brown. Why were my brothers and sisters turning colors and disappearing? I didn't understand it, until I started changing myself. I felt somehow unique. This only meant I was getting older. Soon I will have to take that journey and meet my brothers and sisters at the other side.

My skin is wrinkled, not even rain will smooth it out. I have no more days in me. I'm as dry as a leaf can be, just wishing a strong wind would take me away. I have lived a happy life. I have seen the sun at sunrise, the moon at dusk, the clouds surrounding me, the rain touching me, and life passing me day by day. I'm a single leaf, put to rest on this windy day...

Thank you God.

Moonlit Angels

Susanne Dwyer
SAS

The two lovers gazed
 Into each others eyes
 And beheld
 Each others beauty.
 They stood
 A breath apart,
 Nude
 Under the candlelit sky.
 The sand
 Flowed like honey
 Through their fingertips.
 The water glistened
 Like juicy nectar,
 Dripping down
 An infant's dimpled chin.
 Slowly they descended...
 The tides rushing in and
 Engulfing their milky
 Shadow.
 The outstretched hands of Time
 Stroked their silky hair while
 The morning sprung
 From the depths
 Of a towering wave.
 The hovering sun replaced
 The concealing moon.
 Yet the sand
 Still bore one mere trace
 Of the lovers'
 Sacred encounter:
 A silhoutte of an angel
 Waving goodbye
 To the lonely dusk.

My Mother

Margaret Vlazny
GS

So finely formed, must have been a
favorite of the Unseen Artist. Of all
the colors of his rainbow, He chose red
and loaned it to her to wear for the long
journey. How softly now, regretfully,
He brushes her with age, whispering to
Beauty that its time to go inside.

As I, the silent Witness,
weep upon the eggshell breast
of my newborn daughter
who came from within.

Against The Wall

Renee Blackwell
SAS

Standing against the wall a man stood.
He was mocked by men that did not know him.
The men laughed, taunted and tortured him.
Throwing a red robe around his frail and beaten body.
A crown of thorns, sharply placed upon his head.

Taking the cruelty, he says a silent prayer.
Tears from his eyes nourish the ground beneath him.
Late in the afternoon they crucified him.

Decades later I once stood against the wall, where the
peaceful man wept for his fellow man.
I had no crown of thorns.
No red robe.
My body was not beaten or tortured.
I was not bound or held at gun point.
I stood facing the world and the world faced me.
The world called me:
Nigger, monkey, stupid, unequal, female,
heathen, lazy, savage, inhuman, fat, ugly,
property, homo, nymph, darkie, yella,
and worthless.

As I heard these words, my face became worn,
my body frail and beaten. Suddenly a red robe was placed
around me, a crown of thorns placed on my head; then finally
they

CRUCIFIED ME!

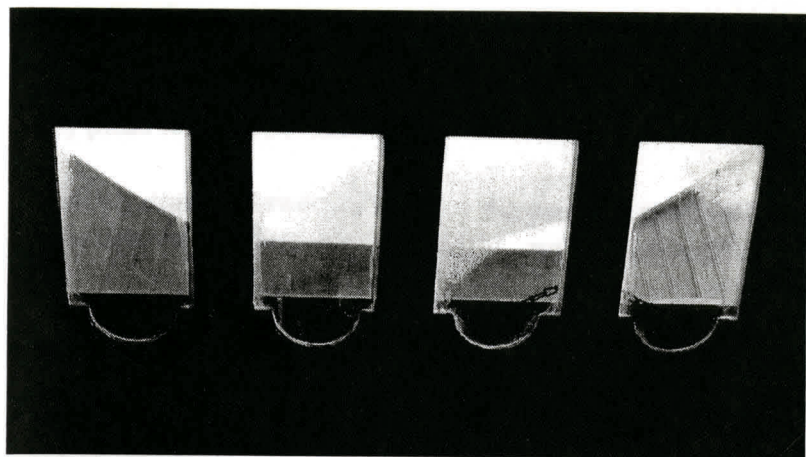


Photo by Chris Kozłowski, SAS

Leslie: Novice Poet

Robert Maldonado
SNR

She is eleven and excited
about her growing up.

She sits at the rear of the church
after an Indian summer

Sunday morning service;
a jubilant condition.

She has sun-washed, wind-blown
earth-brown hair,

large curious, chestnut-colored
eyes vivid and questioning.

With all the wealth of childhood,
she sizzles a smile of sunshine

and asks over her shoulder,
"may you read

my two poems and tell me
what you think of them?"

She had written them
when she was ten.

One has left me nipped in the midst
of weeping children

(inseparable from their skates)
watching the snow melt.

The other kindled my heart--
they plead for unconditional love,

"...all precious and sweet,".
Although she is vulnerable

to intimidation, she was born
with a gift of confidence

and a sense that the world
was created for the dreamer.

She knows that I would give her
a smile that would reach

clear to her heart
(where angels sing)

and that our eyes
would cut a look

from the pages, to meet
in agreement and then separate

(a gleam glimmers
in the skirt of her glasses).

She is eighteen
and eight years old as God continues

to mend hearts
through what she thought

of herself to be --
an amateur.

Am I Your Problem?

Audreinee Harvey
SNR

I see your Frustration,
I see your Pain,
I feel your Anguish.

AM I YOUR PROBLEM?
AM I TO BLAME?

Anxiety filled Nights,
Mind Tormenting Fights.
I am your Suffering. I see your Pain.

AM I YOUR PROBLEM?
AM I TO BLAME?

Your Physical Torment,
Your felt Distress.
I worry so much, about your continued Unhappiness.
It's time to let go of Despair.
Sugar, it is for you that I Care.

So Say,

I AM YOUR PROBLEM...I AM TO BLAME.

Call Me Pumpkin

Orlando Warren
SNR

I was awakened by the sound of Uncle Cedric passing my door. I knew it was uncle because he had a pronounced limp (he'd been thrown by a horse), and his left leg would wobble something awful and then go slack, dragging the ground.

After looking at the clock (It was 12:15.), I got up, put on my robe and peered out the door. Uncle was still on the stairs. It would take him at least two minutes to reach the bottom. He could have had a wheelchair and one of those electrical lifts to take him up and down. His doctors had done their utmost to convince him, but he wouldn't hear of it. Aunt Martha said that it was because Uncle Cedric was hopelessly independent. However, I was more inclined to agree with Maria, the head maid and my only friend, who said it was because he was hopelessly cheap.

I stood in the doorway, waiting, listening. I wondered what could it be, what could possibly be so important that it would drive him out of bed at this hour--a man to whom sleep was hibernation, who rarely rose before 11:00 A.M. At least this has been so since my arrival, less than a year ago after the deaths of my parents, after their car swerved off the icy road into the ravine, less than a mile from our home.

After the accident, I was placed here, in the home of my only living relative, Aunt Martha, mother's elder sister. Aunt Martha and Uncle Cedric never had children of their own. This was by design. Thus, they mourned not only the loss of my parents, but also the loss of their once peaceful existence. True, I wanted for nothing, except, of course, love. For with my guardians, affection was not forthcoming.

Finally, Uncle Cedric ambled off the stairs and turned into the dining room, which was more of an arena. It seated sixteen. I followed. He went into the kitchen, where I heard him open a cabinet. A moment later, I saw the small ray of a

flashlight. I stumbled against a chair and caught it just before it fell. Uncle heard me and pointed the light in my direction. I ducked behind the chair, as the light cut through the darkness. Luckily, he didn't follow it. Then he opened the door.

The November wind rushed in. I shivered, re-tied my robe, hesitated because I hated the cold, but my curiosity was running wild, and nothing short of a blizzard would deter me. When I opened the door, Uncle was disappearing into the density of the woods. He was moving faster, now, obviously prompted more by the weather than by a sudden rejuvenation of his limbs. He was headed in the direction of the greenhouse.

Uncle just stood there for a moment with his hands at his side. Then he reached back into his pocket (his body was angled so that I saw the knife before she--if she ever saw it at all). Her face, which only a moment before, bore on it the stamp of dejection, was now infused with triumph. But it wasn't her last only (the knife would see to that). Her last look was enough to make the most arid horror cringe in a hundred different shapes: the bones loosened in its sack, and her eyes rolled back in her head and disappeared. The blade too disappeared, except for the handle, which protruded from her chest like an extra limb. Then she crumbled to the floor, small as if there were nothing inside the coat but its lining.

Again, Uncle turned. I ducked. I wanted to run but couldn't. I rose slowly, peered in. He was dragging her body through the side door, deep into the woods. I followed, more cautiously than ever. He left her body camouflaged in a thick patch of shrubbery. Then he headed for the main house.

I had to take a longer route back. I ran as fast as my half frozen legs could take me, knowing that even with his bad leg, Uncle would be only moments behind, which luckily for me, was exactly how it turned out. I reached home in no more than a minute before he did. I hurried up the stairs, into my room and bed. I supposed, Uncle was too tired, too cold, or too upset, to dispose of the body. That was, of course, too stupid.

* * * * *

I was having breakfast when Uncle came into the dining room. He was flushed and wheezing as if he'd been running.

"Where's your Aunt? He growled.

"At the beauty parlor," I said, "though I can't imagine why."

He ignored my stab at levity, so I went back to my meal. Then he came over and sat down beside me. His face softened.

"Justine," he said.

"Yes, Uncle."

"Where is she?"

"I told you, Uncle Cedric--at the parlor.

"Not your Aunt, girl!" He screamed and, then, listening for the servants, lowered his voice and said, "You know--do not play with me girl. The woman--the woman you saw me with last night.

I gave him my silliest expression. Then I said, "What woman? Whatever do you mean, Uncle?"

"You know full well what I mean. I thought I heard you last night, but I wasn't certain. Had I caught you, well, never mind. Now tell me where is she?"

This was more fun than I'd hoped for. Uncle was seething. Then Uncle leaped to his feet and kicked over his chair, with his good leg, nearly falling. I must admit, he scared me, but I didn't let on. Instead, I pretended to stifle a giggle. Then Maria entered the room, carrying a cup of weak coffee for me. She poured the coffee, picked up the chair, and retraced her steps without a word.

After she left, Uncle whispered, "Some things are not good for little girls, you know."

I smiled. "If its good enough for you, Uncle," I said, "its good enough for me."

* * * * *

This went on for two weeks. I would be lying, if I were to say that I didn't enjoy it. Not the part about the woman, mind you--I felt horrible about her. But I was at the stage in life where both tragedy and joy were still mostly transient features in my ever evolving psyche. Nothing touched me as did the

death of my parents. But as much as I loved them and would always love them, I realized that they were part of my past, and that I had to take care of myself.

* * * * *

Two weeks passed. Uncle cornered me in the garage, as I was putting away my bike. He shoved me against the wall, still bellowing the same refrain, "Where is she, Justine? Where is she? Tell me or I'll--"

"Or you'll what, Uncle? Do to me what you did to that poor woman?"

"Poor! She was--"

"Blackmailing you. Serves you right, a man of your years. What would Aunt Martha think?"

"Oh shut up, you little ass," he said.

"Are you going to use that knife on me Uncle--the one you used on that woman? It's a beaut. However, you might as well put me down. I'll admit it--I know where the body is."

He loosened his hold. "Where?" He said.

"Somewhere safe," I said.

"Oh, never mind. I'll find her myself."

"Isn't that what you've been trying to do for the last two weeks, Uncle. Let's face it, Uncle, you have thousands of acres; and there are fields and streams you've never explored and considering your handicap, your not likely to find her anytime soon, if at all.

"You couldn't have taken her far," he said.

"Far enough, Uncle. So far that in two weeks of searching, you're still searching."

Uncle reached in his pocket for his knife. He said, "You know what I should do--do you not?"

I smiled and said, "Two missing bodies! Now Uncle, please. Don't be silly. Besides, what about this?" I reached into my pocket and pulled out a piece of the woman's bloody blouse.

He didn't say anything--just stared at it.

Finally, I said what was on his mind. "My friend has the other part."

"You don't have any friends . . . only--

"Yes, Uncle."

"Maria!" He said, his voice dropping to a whisper.

"Maybe. If so, then you do have a problem, Uncle, for Maria has many friends."

Uncle, realizing that he was beaten, released me and crumbled, not unlike the woman, into one of the garden chairs. "What do you want?" He said.

"Well," I said, "First of all, I want you to be nice to me.

"For Christsakes."

"No Uncle, for your sake."

"What else?"

"I want you to open the house to the neighbors."

"What neighbors? We're miles from the nearest residents."

"Then bus them in, Uncle, you can afford it."

"And?"

"I want Maria's salary doubled and my allowance tripled"

"Maria! I should have fired her years ago--but, Justine why do you need thirty dollars, you're only eleven.

"Because I love money, Uncle. And I'm eleven and a half."

"Is there anything else?--your own car, a separate cottage for you and your Mexican cohort?"

"In due time, Uncle. In due time. But now I have only one request."

"You mean order, don't you."

"Now--now, Uncle."

"What . . . do you want?"

"I want you to call me Pumpkin."

"Are you mad?"

"It's what daddy used to call me."

"Never!"

Then I gave him the look, the one he would never challenge, the one he would take into his grave. I said, "We're going to have a grand time--are we not?" Uncle?

"Right--right."

"U-N-C-L-E!"

"Right, uh,uh, right . . . Pumpkin."

The Quahog

Melissa Varnavas
SAS

I know a man in the reflection clam
yet talks of distant days,
His mind a light with future fires
and wooded paths which lost their way.

I saw that man and spoke with the clam
my mind a fog and haze.
So true I said, I see, I said
the destruction of future ways.

But can you see? The man said to me
the decaying leaf and pine.
I looked at him with sorry eyes
and saw the grey clay of my mind.

No more nectar to drink
Nor shade to eat.
The time for death is 'nigh.
"A lie, a lie

My screams resounded against the shell
of water dish and wishing well.

He's good and kind
I know dear clam
that love is blind
yet sights before the moon
have past
And life is dreams
which do not last.

But life which breaths but
day to day and sees
The glory of human ways.

You dear clam
 Return thyself to the
 Isle of the Dammed
 Your hypnotic lance
 and provocative stance
 Shall not unburden me.
 I'll carry my weight
 Dear friend and more
 and shall there be
 some day a knock
 upon my door,
 Your face I'll see
 In vacant obscurity.

And in the mirrored plate
 of sunken eyes
 Reflect back to me
 your blood filled pies
 of jealously

A gift you had my friend
 In your palm had lain the clam
 The pearl inside you could not grasp
 So you tore the bricks from the dam
 And let the water of deceit flow forth.

One by one the masses fell
 Your words a silent citadel
 They did not see your true face
 Beneath the drug haze of disgrace.

Someday I shall see
 Beyond the picture others made me
 And into the soul of another
 And melding so like lava
 After the cool,cool,cool, rain
 We, he and I shall know no more of pain.

The Resurrection

Robert Maldonado
SNR

In the morning when Mary
finds the awe-struck spectacle of nature,
she will dash
to the dwelling of the disciples
and claim on target veracity
which will be mistakenly
charged as delirium.

But at this moment
throughout a great overcast
she lies lamenting the loss of her Lord.
It is the watching hour:
the elements of creation
seem to have come to a halt,
surrenderously
in motionless efforts,
devotedly awaiting His
tempestuous voice of command.

A Revelation From Wetness

Susan Marie Paprota
SAS

As the tear rolls down my face,
I recognize it: a prophetic whisper
of a world gone mad.
Every grace of humanity is dehumanized
in contemporary times.
The natural ease of a simple life is sacrificed for
a complex web of pain and suffering.
Simplicity is lost,
and the overwhelming threat of complexity
takes over and consumes its modern victims.
They do not know it, and glorify themselves in
the thought of their success.
But they have lost the most important battle of all,
and confusion hysterically glares at them in its
triumphant victory.
There are a few of us who suffer this loss,
only a certain few.
We are those who know true meaning:
a vision of innocence and authenticity centering on
humanity rather than evil, self-centered greed.
The wicked ones repress us and we will forever remain
until they divorce themselves from sin.

Shannon

Bushra Rehman
SAS

Colors spiral, blend, unfold, spin dry. Erased are memories of last night, a tie-dyed magical time. Laundry time. Pinkened, perfumed warm air, bunnies hop through cotton holes as my rags are rejuvenated. Where are they, the various body fluids which leaked out in warmth, pleasure and fear? Have they been washed away to sea? How easy it seems to erase memories from these rags. What mixture of herbs would do the same for my mind?

It was an especially warm night, a gift in times of declining temperatures and moods. Crystalline raindrops jitterbugged in the mist. Our restless souls wishing to do the same, Shannon and I gathered together our portable beams of light and sticks of fire. Then, connecting our feet to Converse shoes representing different pieces of rainbow, we ventured out. We cleansed ourselves in rivers and seas of rainwater and made our way to the nearest piece of intact nature: Glen Island. Laughing, speaking nonsense, yet making more sense than most, we spoke of our world. The uselessness of life terrified us, but set us into fits of giggles. The great power we had been given to decide our own fate frightened us, but gave us an increased sense of power.

On our way to Glen Island, we came across yachts involved in an exciting game of yahtzee. We found enormous toy boats that wealthy persons had bought to amuse themselves. In this toy chest, we found a tiny tennis court. We stayed to watch an imaginary tennis match. There, we discovered the simple answer to what humans have been pondering over their entire lives: the reason for being. We realized that it was simple truth, if applied, made for a daisy chain reaction in which everyone would be bombarded with bits of goodness from all.

The tennis match was quite dull and we were itching to find the Island. Shannon and I decided to leave the huffing,

puffing players. We followed the quiet, which seemed to increase as we came close to Glen Island. Quiet, we refused to introduce light into this world of darkness and silence. We made it to the rocks and watched the beautiful swans pass by. Silly birds, sticking their ivory heads in browned mud, their bottoms exposed to the Indigo sky and watching eye, all in order to continue their beautiful existences. It seems dipping into substances for beautiful existences is the trend.

The water lapping at our feet was our connection. This very liquid was the great wanderer, seeing all, yet telling nothing. Touching this great body connected us to shores millions of miles away. The salt of my feet became the residue on a distant shore. Travelling from shore to shore, the liquid of life studied drier creatures.

We wondered about the driest of creatures. Sitting before TV screens, they lived their lives vicariously through imaginary characters. The absurdity of it was amusing, yet appalling. Millions of lives were being sucked in by a square of electronic flashes. Why? Why couldn't they put down their munchies, get off their bottoms and from somewhere deep within find the power to turn off the cube which was sucking them dry?

The far away suns and shining planet made us feel insignificant. Ironically, our insignificance lightened our burdens. We realized it was our very own conceited, self-centered minds which convinced us of our own importance and made life such a great burden. Humans are completely insignificant. The greater being has no high expectations of us. This being created us; it knows how absurd we are. We are simply entertainment. Our small sins mean nothing to this being. Is this being as touchy and petty as humans, that it would be offended by my lack of use of capital letter as I describe it? Concerning such man-imagined misdemeanors against the greater being, will it really care?

Words spiral, blend, unfold, spin dry. Where are they, the various colorful memories which formed in warmth, pleasure and fear? Have they been washed away to sea?

Almas gemelas

Suzannette Lebrón
SAS

Quiero compartir, contigo,
mi corazón,
mis pensamientos,
mis ideales,
mi más íntimo...

Quiero pedirte
que me ayudes
a conservar este
fuego vestal
perenemente vivo...

Quiero estar contigo, dentro de tu ser,
dondequiera que estés,
y formar un vínculo único,
una infalible unión...

Creedme, no quiero ser egoísta, pues es
imposible.

Comenzemos a compartir todo
lo que pensamos,
lo que creemos,
lo que creamos,
entre nosotros,

pues es muy óbvio que nuestras almas
se están transformando en gemelas.

Twin Souls

Translation

I want to share with you
my heart,
my thoughts,
my ideals,
my innermost...

I want to ask you
to help me
to keep this
Vestal flame
eternally alive!

I want to stay with you
wherever you are
and form a unique bond,
a perfect tie...

Believe me, I am not selfish, surely
I am not.

Let us begin to share everything
we think,
we believe,
we create,
with each other,
since We are becoming
twin souls.



Artwork by Maryse Kowack, SAS

Spring

Andrea Mihalovic
SAS

the air is fresh and clean
the breeze of spring
and the smell of trees
I welcome
as we walk together
uncertain of
what the future holds

the mountain is happy to hear
our childlike laughter
while we stop and smell
the flowers, our life
how beautiful it seems
to be

we run together, screaming
names of the boys
we're sure we love
embracing the air
impatiently waiting
to be big enough to kiss
to be loved

I will never leave you
and you will always stay
and our friendship is
sure to conquer
all that comes our way
is what I said
and what I meant

now years have passed
along with many springs
the mountain stands still
waits for our laughter
and our screams
to begin

but I have left
and you did not stay
and the boys we loved
are now men
kissing someone else's lips
but our friendship
and the love of spring

A Statue

Andrea Mihalovic
SAS

your face seemed so
sad and empty
as if your loved one
has left you behind
is it possible that
in the world of art
you may still want
to cry?
I know you're not alive
but wonder
how would you be
the perfect man
the perfect lover
in this imperfect world
you may just stay
as you are.
Still I want to know
what would you feel
if I could show you
how to feel.
In my world of art
I fall in love with

Stuy Park

Bushra Rehman
SAS

Chocolate-batter-covered squirrels, stimulated dogs, fattened pigeons, starving artists, wealthy bottle men, greedy pretzel vendors, stressed students and burnt druggies surrounded a contented me. Somewhere on the circumference of a cement circle, I watched a broken pipe serve as a fountain for Stuy Park.

Mornings, I would crawl out of the slivery, silvery worm. Confused by the contrast of the grimy tunnel and the outside world, I'd grope towards my moist bed-bench and fall asleep. Half a dream later, a tap and a shade, I'd open my eyes to fuzzy soft-colored faces far behind extended arms offering unscrewed bottles of Mystical juices. Sipping, I'd watch the members of the park pass through the black-slash gates. I'd welcome them, as they fled from crumbling buildings and crumbling lives.

The day would begin. Silent guitars would begin to pass notes from member to member in the circle. The hysterical cries of a neurotic girl would be silenced by the jingling, jangling music of the bottle man, wealthy enough to buy an over-priced pretzel and Mystic. A birthday girl would be presented with raw cake batter. Her tongue juices would dissolve the thin chocolate veneer. Salty juices would reveal the crumbly chocolate dirt, fill her mouth and nauseate her. With a polite thank-you, she would toss the rest of the gooey substance into the bushes where unsquashed squirrels would soon be covered with the sticky substance.

A thin, oily-haired man would pause in mid-sentence. He would watch the squirrels, his drool spilling over, absorbed by his beard. He would continue to boast of his unacknowledged greatness. He would pause only to ask for spare change to buy a Mystic to tide him over until his big break. I would laugh at him and watch his words, heavy with conceit, flow into the

stream of others' spoken thoughts on books, music and politics. They would bob along for a while before sinking to the bottom. The bottles of Mystic would be emptied and everyone would return home. The day had come to an end.

Now, the metallic worms have been removed from my doorstep and the path to Stuy Park is obstructed by murky Hudsonian green. My ears long to hear the jingling of nickels, the plucking of guitars, the hysterical cries of girls, and the pop music of bubbly juices. My mind has been drained of Outer-Stuy knowledge and my mind has been drained of Outer-Stuy love. Now, surrounded by man-planned trees and highways, I find myself trapped in a nightmare, hoping to awaken to the fuzzy image of an oily artist, who collects bottles in order to buy an overpriced pretzel, offering me a sip of his vanilla-peach Mystic backwash.

Ode To Joy

Kathleen Jones
SAS/GS

I am a Goddess.

I am a slave.

I am a Dragon-Slayer.

I am a Dragon.

I am a journey long
since begun.

I have climbed the Matterhorn
seeking new horizons
and have swept the valley
to clear away the past.

I am life-death-continuity.

I am.

A Tale Of Truth

Muriel Greenspan
SAS

Once upon a time there was a little girl, and adorable little girl that was born to John and Maggie in the spring of 'Fifty-One. The little girl was a happy little child who showed dimples with her smiles and had two older sisters that closely watched over her. She was an extremely active child that would be out the door and down the street in Mrs. Weaver's fish pond the moment her mother turned her back. Maggie often talked about the day in winter when she scaled a six foot chain link fence to get the little girl wading in the pond who was only trying to catch the huge goldfish that lived there. They were so gold, so shiny and so magical that perhaps if only the little girl could catch them, they would bring her magic.

This was a very nice family with three pretty girls, a pretty mommy, and a handsome daddy, John, who was rising up the ladder of success quickly while working for a popular magazine.

The little girl had a very difficult time early on in her life making sense out of ANYTHING. There were many things wrong with this happy little picture that were invisible to the naked eye. Only one with special powers would be able to detect the strange happenings going on in this pretty house with the crystal clean windows and the fancy lace curtains. You see, a dragon lived here...and it was very unpredictable!

The little girl sensed the presence of the dragon from the moment she was born. Its existence made her restless and she began to wander. Maggie would put her in a harness at night and tie her in to the crib because the little girl would climb out and get into mischief. Night time was scary for the little girl because she would be tied in with no one there to protect her. The dragon came at night. She had seen it with her own eyes a couple of times. It was enormous, with big scary bloodshot eyes. His mouth had a huge red tongue that he would curl up and bite on with his ugly teeth. The dragon was violent and

had great strength. Fire would exhale from his nostrils and a hot putrid odor would blast out over his tongue. No man dare come near him. The girl was very frightened and would bang her head against her pillow trying to extinguish the thoughts of the nasty creature.

A couple of years went by and the family moved to Connecticut to a red house with friendly apple trees. The girl, joyous, pleased with the possibility that the dragon had been left behind in the old house with the crystal windows and lace curtains. It soon became evident that the dragon followed them. The little girl would disappear to play with other children and stay away as long as possible. She became an avid apple tree climber and would only be satisfied to climb as close to the sun as she could get--maybe the sun would give her the power to ward off the dragon. John would be frightened to see her so far up in the trees--hanging upside down but she was as adept as a monkey.

Years went by and the dragon came many times...sometimes breaking furniture and beating her mother, leaving her with purple, red, and blue bruises. No one would speak of this invader. They would pretend he did not exist. The little girl began urinating in her bed at night because she had learned to fall into a deep, deep sleep to escape the noises of the dragon.

After five years the family moved to yet a bigger house - a mansion. No young children lived here and the little girl became very sad and lonely. Not only was this house haunted with ghosts, but the nooks and crannies in this old mansion created an atmosphere in which the dragon would thrive. She could feel his presence all around her now and as she approached adolescence the dragon would appear sometimes daily. The little girl became troubled but no one noticed. She became angry about the way the family was badgered and held prisoner by the beast. Her anger evolved into rage as the beast became preoccupied with controlling his domain. Maggie would beg the girl to be sweet to the dragon in order to keep peace in the home. The little girl began to defy the dragon and he became abusive. The dragon would tangle the girl's beauti-

ful hair in his claws and drag her up the formal winding old staircase of the mansion, throw her in her room and lock her door with a skeleton key. Often he would bruise the girl and once broke a bone in the girl's face. No one noticed.

The war between the ugly dragon and the restless little girl lasted for many decades--long after the girl had run away. The girl searched for a cure for her fear and restlessness. There were magic potions, enchanted kingdoms and beautiful princes explored in hopes of rescuing her from the clutches of the dragon's fiery grip.

Finally the little girl fell ill and became feeble. Her health was declining rapidly. She suffered from heart sickness and despair. Her dimples showed no more. Her eyes were dull and filled with clouds of doom.

A messenger was sent to her just at the moment when the little girl was certain she would die. The messenger was extraordinarily gifted and possessed the powers to see her illness. The messenger was able to acknowledge the existence of the deadly invisible dragon and brought others to help release the girl from the dragon's powers. Slowly the girl regained her health through the help of her new friends..in time the little girl was free to grow up. She learned that a spell had been cast on her family tree and the dragon had flourished as he passed on from generation to generation.

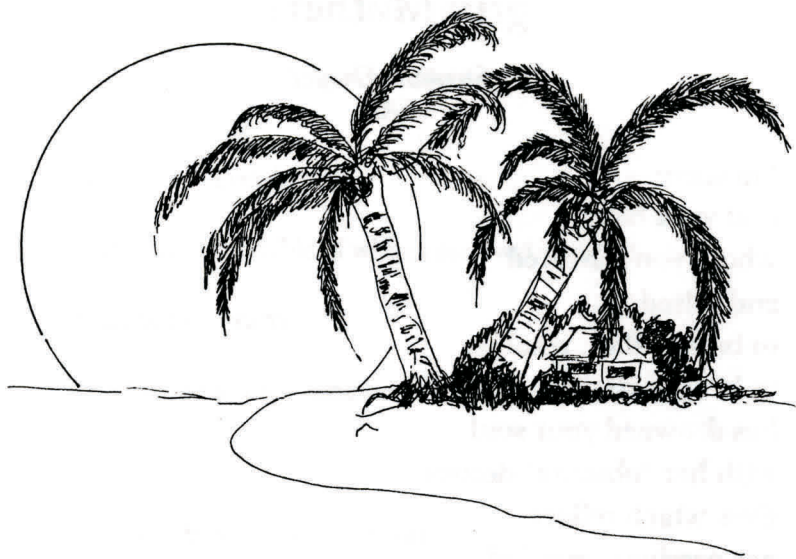
After some time passed the girl was able to break the spell. She was able to live in peace that her children would never have to know the fear of living with the horrible dragon...they were safe at long last. Safe at last...

Talking With Rain

Lyvett Velazquez

SAS

I didn't notice you were here
until I heard your innocent
drops falling. You know, this
is the first time I really heard you.
You sound so peaceful, like sweet lullaby.
Sitting here, admiring you, my fear and anger
are gone. I've locked out the rest of the world,
so I can be with you.
I can listen to you forever.
What...?



Artwork by Lyvett Velazquez, SAS

What's happening...? No...?

You can't leave me.

Please don't go...

I want to hear your sweet, soft sound again...

No...!

Don't leave me here! Take me with you

so I can be free, like you, and just drop on God's creations...

DON'T GO...!!

To Mother

Susanne Dwyer
SAS

I'm sorry
that your baby,
whom you nurtured
and raised
to be steadfast, resolute
in her convictions,
has drowned your soul
with her "obscure" desires.
Eyes which reflect
her passions unveiled,
stare seductively at figures which
mirror her own.
That feminine spirit
driving her
to love . . .
to love . . .
Vulnerable,
your baby lies
with outstretched arms
waiting . . .
Blinded by reality,
you close your eyes
and dream of holding
your baby
again,
protecting her from
your idea of
sin.

The Wedding

Lisa Nicoletti
SAS

He follows her in ever-brightening circles,
Hands clasped over a table of white roses and lavender,
A carousel of two hearts,
Happily whirling to the sounds of sunshine and candlelight.

He follows her in a crescendo of stars,
Arm in arm into a bright pool of smiles and laughter,
A garden of shared joy,
Contentedly humming to the songs of hearts and friends.

He follows her in a gaze of soft wonder,
Souls joined through a chorus of Heaven and dreams,
A truth of fantasy love,
Joyously dancing to the melodies of beginnings and forever.

The Touch

Orlando Warren
SNR

The murder was committed in broad daylight at a popular seaside resort in Jamaica. This act was more than bold. It was insane. But Kev Mathews was a bit of both. Besides, when Kev finally decided to do away with Jilly, he concluded that the boldest approach would probably be the best.

Though committed to the crime, Kev actually regretted what he was about to do. Jilly had once shared every part of his life. She was beautiful and intelligent. She was also the finest pickpocket he had ever worked with. She had the touch. And when she wasn't busy lifting some sucker's wallet, she was busy working the tension out of Kev's muscles. In fact, she and Kev had become so close they even considered making their liaison legal. But that was nearly three years ago. Since then, they had gone their separate ways--that is, until now. Now Jilly was an insurmountable obstacle to Kev's present plans. Yes, in order to survive, he would have to kill her.

Before Jilly re-entered his life Kev had had it made. He had met and seduced heiress Margaret Rothchild. Margaret, barely out of finishing school, was no match for the 40-something Kev. However, gullibility was something that Margaret came by naturally. Her parents had taken Kev at face value and accepted him as their daughter's fiance without making the slightest inquiry into his past. Kev always flashed a huge smile whenever he thought of the Rothchilds.

The Rothchilds were sailing back to the states after Kev and Margaret's wedding. They were now in Paris buying Margaret's trousseau. Kev was to join them later.

Once he and Margaret were married that would be the end of it. Her parents would not trouble him. He could then proceed to purge Margaret of her inheritance. But first he had to purge himself of Jilly.

It wasn't easy keeping Jilly in the background, while at the same time building a relationship with the Rothchilds. She

had already blackmailed him out of several thousand dollars. Yet it wasn't just money she wanted. She also wanted him. But, of course, this couldn't be. Kev had decided that there was no room in his life for both Margaret and Jilly.

Knowing that Jilly would jump at the chance to spend some romantic time with him, Kev invited her to the resort. Of course, she accepted. That Kev was planning her demise never enter Jilly's mind. She had always been able to more or less have her way with him, except for their separation. And that was her fault. For when he needed to assent himself, she wouldn't let him. So she interpreted this present rebellion of his as his subtle--albeit lackluster way of re-asserting himself. As it was, she was half right.

Kev picked Jilly up at her hotel. He drove an old, dilapidated, gray sedan. He parked in a lot in the midst of a string of equally old cars. A postal fore was now probably wondering what had become of his car, which he had left parked last night outside of his office. The car now had new number plates and an artistically altered license.

Kev parked near the harbor, less than a mile from where he would take the train to his boat. He and Jilly got in the back seat, and between passionate kisses, he nearly changed his mind about killing her. He had forgotten what a great kisser she was. When she started coveting certain portions of his clothing, and those long, wonderful fingers of hers all but made him scream in delight, he nearly called the whole thing off. But then the image of Margaret, and all her sweet money, suddenly pushed its way into the vehicle between them.

Kev broke off the kiss. He looked around. Several other couples were also amorously engaged. He stared into Jilly's eyes for the last time. They appeared to be smiling. Then he kissed her again, feeling her arms circle him, as he applied just enough pressure to vital points, squeezing gently the life out of her.

Afterwards, Kev felt terrible, believing that perhaps Jilly really did love him. To make matters worse, he knew that Margaret would never be the kisser Jilly was. For a moment, just a moment, he wondered if he had acted too hastily. Maybe he could have kept them both.

Kev took his time leaving the car--not that anyone was watching. He was right on schedule. It would take him 20 minutes at a leisurely stroll to reach the train. He got to the station just as his train pulled in.

Kev boarded the train, and several minutes later exited it and slowly inched his way towards the Customs shed. He was smiling.

It wasn't until he was second in line that he reached into his pocket breast pocket. He felt once, twice, swallowed and then let out a gasp of horror and disbelief--his passport was gone. He searched again through his pockets. Nothing. Then he put down his suitcase and began to rifle through it--all while hearing the passport agents refrain, "Passports, please. Have your passports ready."

Frantically, Kev closed his suitcase and then opened the small shaving case he had draped over his shoulder. But his passport wasn't there, either. Actually, only a minute or two had passed, but to Kev it was hours. Soaked in perspiration, he looked up at the voice.

"Ah, lost you passport, have you sir? That's terrible, just terrible. Don't worry. We have a very efficient police force. Meanwhile, you must remain here. Can't go aboard without it.

Kev, usually a cool one, began to hyperventilate, as the image of Jilly's tender arms and busy hands encircled him. Jilly! Yes, she still had the touch.

"Don't worry sir," the passport agent said, "all you have to do is give the particulars. Your passport will most certainly be found."

And, of course, it was.

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